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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 1, 2004

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-216 - Creston-Bell Corridor) Project No. V-S-04/13

TO: Tom Murphy
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/Bell-1

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management in selected right of way (ROW) sections of the Creston-Bell corridor being comprised of the following transmission lines: Grand Coulee-Bell #1, Grand Coulee-Bell #2, Grand Coulee-Bell #3, Grand Coulee-Bell #5, Grand Coulee-Bell #6 and Grand Coulee-West Side #1. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission line corridor as identified in Attachment 1, Checklist.

Location: The project is situated in Lincoln and Spokane County, Washington and is the Spokane Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in the rights-of-ways and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission lines. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. BPA's overall goal is to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

Analysis: This project meets the standards and guidelines for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Planning Steps:

1. **Identify facility and the vegetation management need.**

   The project will take place along selected ROW sections of the following transmission lines:

   - Grand Coulee-Bell #1 and #2 (structures 4/1 to 9/6 and 38/7 to 40/8)
   - Grand Coulee-Bell #2 (structures 77/3 to 84/4)
   - Grand Coulee-Bell #3 and #5 (structures 33/1 to 41/2 and 77/2 to 85/6)
   - Grand Coulee-Bell #6 (structures 33/1 to 41/2)
   - Grand Coulee-West Side #1 (structures 3/2 to 10/6).

The work involved will be to clear tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon pose a hazard to the lines and selectively eliminating tall growing vegetation *before* it reaches a height or density to begin competing with low-growing vegetation. Minor stump treatment may be used to reduce re-sprouting of selected broadleaf vegetation. All work will take place in existing rights-of-ways, around structures and on access roads.

Also, all off right-of-way trees that are potentially unstable and will fall within a minimum distance or into the zone where the conductors swing will be removed. All work will be accomplished by manual or mechanical control methods to assure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. Desirable low-growing plants will not be disturbed. The work will provide system reliability and fire protection.

The vegetation control will be ongoing every 8 years as tall growing vegetation and target trees are identified.

2. Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers and any mitigation.

The transmission line ROW traverses private ownership lands consisting of small, managed woodlots. There are agricultural parcels scattered throughout the project area. The types and density of trees to be removed are noted on Attachment 1, Checklist. No other agencies or Tribal involvement exists.

The landowner will be contacted if trees pose a hazard to the line. This contact will be by letters, phone calls and onsite visits. In areas where there is an active tree agreement, no cutting will be performed if owner brings trees into compliance. In areas of active cattle grazing, debris will be chipped or removed from the site.

3. Identify natural resources and any mitigation.

Surface Water Resources

Surface water resources (i.e. lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, wetlands) within a ½ mile vicinity of the corridor have been identified through BPA's GIS system (i.e.Tview2) but no planned work activities will impact these mapped areas.

For any work performed within close proximity of wetlands, the following mitigation measures will be observed:

- No vehicle equipment will enter wetlands.
- All work will be performed using handheld equipment.
- All fueling operations will be performed outside the wetland area.

For any work performed within close proximity of lakes, rivers, streams and creeks, the following buffers and mitigation measures will be observed to avoid disturbing any potential fish habitat:

- Low-growing vegetation that provides shade will be protected. A 35-foot buffer will be observed to protect the creek's canopy.
- No herbicides will be applied near potential fish-bearing waterways. Only cutting and topping will be performed as necessary.
- Cut trees will not be felled into the creek unless directed to do so by the State or Federal Fish & Wildlife.

- Vehicles will be kept away from water channels to minimize erosion and sedimentation of waters.
- Standard erosion control practices will be employed, if necessary, to prevent sedimentation of the water.

Irrigation sources, Wells or Springs
No known irrigation sources, wells or springs are present along the right of way.

T&E Species and Habitats
A species list request was received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service on May 3, 2004 identifying listed species in the project counties. The information concerning T&E species and habitats was verified using several databases (i.e. Tview2, Northwest Sub basin Geographic Data Browser, Washington Natural Heritage Program, USFW TESS). A determination of No Effects was made for all ESA listed species and Essential Fish Habitat for the project.

Sensitive Areas
No visually sensitive areas have been identified.

Cultural Resources
No cultural resources have been identified. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and a professional archaeologist will be notified.

Erosion Control
Erosion potential will be minimal due the method of cutting (handheld chainsaws).

4. Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.

Vegetation control on all lands will be performed using manual and mechanical methods. No herbicides will be used with the exception of minor stump treatment.

Debris will either be disposed using lop and scatter methods, chipped in residential/high traffic sites or chipped/removed from active grazing pastures.

5. Determine re-vegetation methods, if necessary.

Due to minimal soil disturbance, no seeding is planned.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

The right-of-way identified in the checklist will be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all hazard trees have been removed from these areas. Follow-up monitoring will occur in the fall of 2004 and the summer of 2005.

7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that 1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; 2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ James R. Meyer for
Michael A. Rosales
Environmental Physical Scientist

CONCUR:*/s/ Thomas C. McKinney* DATE:6/4/2004
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment

cc:
L. Croff- -KEC-4
T. McKinney – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
M. Rosales – KEPR/Bell-1
P. Key – LC-7
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
K. Rodd – TF/DOB-1
D. Labrosse – TFS/Bell-1
J. Lahti – TFS/Bell-1
M. Borrows – TFSK/Ellensburg
Environmental File – KEC/4
Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

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